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I, JULIE BILLINGSLEY, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. 2003903024 for a patent by WEIR WARMAN LTD as filed on 16 June 2003.



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Twenty-fifth day of June 2004

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**PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION**

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Invention Title: **Improved pump impeller**

The invention is described in the following statement:

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## IMPROVED PUMP IMPELLER

5

### Technical Field

10       The present invention relates to impellers and more particularly to impellers  
suitable for use in centrifugal pumps.

Centrifugal pumps are commonly used to handle liquid mixtures of particulate  
solids in the mineral processing and dredging industries. Those pumps are subject to  
15   severe slurry erosion wear by the particles in the flow which leads to considerable  
economic consequence to such operations. Considerable effort is expended by  
manufacturers and users to try to ameliorate this problem.

Centrifugal pumps, particularly those used for transporting slurries, commonly use  
20   so called "expelling" vanes or auxiliary vanes on the back and front shrouds of the pump's  
impeller to help rotate the fluid in the space between the shroud and the side liner. Those  
auxiliary vanes may be of different shapes depending on the preferences of the individual  
designer.

25       By spinning the fluid in the space between the impeller and the side liner, the static  
pressure at the inlet of the impeller is reduced due to the centrifugal flow induced (vortex  
effect), such that fluid between the auxiliary vanes will flow towards the impeller  
periphery. Fluid returns down the face of the side liner due to the overall driving pressure  
difference between that at the impeller discharge and inlet. Particles in the flow may also  
30   be purged from the gap if the centrifugal force is greater than the fluid drag force tending  
to carry the particles into the gap.

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The major purpose of the auxiliary vanes on the front shroud of the impeller is to reduce the driving pressure forcing the flow from the volute back into the eye of the impeller (recirculating flow). By reducing the recirculating flow velocity, the wear on the impeller and the mating inlet side liner is considerably reduced.

Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

The reference to any prior art in this specification is not, and should not be taken as, an acknowledgment or any form of suggestion that the prior art forms part of the common general knowledge in Australia.

### **Background Art**

There are a number of different shapes of auxiliary vane that have been developed and used in existing impellers.

In one example, shown in United States Patent No. 4664592, and the contents of which are incorporated here by reference, a number of radial auxiliary vanes are used. Those auxiliary vanes are located on the face of the front or back shroud, with an annular projection around the outer ends of the auxiliary vanes, and with a channel extending through the annular projection between adjacent auxiliary vanes.

A problem with the auxiliary vanes, with or without annular projections at the periphery, is that tip vortices form (similar to wingtip vortices) which, when particles are entrained, can cause severe localised gouging wear of the periphery of the impeller and the adjacent side liners.

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As the parts wear, the vortex which forms behind each projecting vane gets larger and stronger causing an ever increasing wear rate in the adjacent side liner.

5       Waters pumps are known which include auxiliary vanes at a smaller diameter than the shroud and main vane diameter (which are usually identical). The reason this is done is not to reduce wear, but to reduce the axial hydraulic thrust acting on the impeller. The auxiliary vane diameter is sized to balance the hydraulic axial thrust.

10

### Disclosure of Invention

An impeller according to the present invention including at least one shroud with main pumping vanes and auxiliary vanes, the shroud extending beyond the diameter of the main pumping vanes and the auxiliary vanes so as to ameliorate wear.

15

In one preferred form, the impeller includes two shrouds, (a front shroud and a back shroud) with the pumping vanes therebetween and auxiliary vanes on one or both of the shrouds. In one embodiment the front shroud extends beyond the diameter of the auxiliary and main pumping vanes. In another embodiment the back shroud extends  
20 beyond the diameter of the auxiliary and main pumping vanes. In yet another arrangement both the front and back shrouds extend beyond the diameter of the auxiliary and pumping vanes. Preferably, the diameter of the pumping vanes and auxiliary vanes are about the same diameter for example within about 5% of each other.

25

Preferably, the pumping and auxiliary vanes are of a similar diameter to ensure adequate pressure reduction and reduce recirculating flow while the impeller shroud extends beyond both so as to ameliorate wear.

30

The benefit of the extended shroud impeller arrangement is that the tip vortex from each auxiliary vane is shed against the face of the extended shroud and is trapped within the gap or space between the shroud and the adjacent side liner. By this construction the

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wear on the impeller and the liner is substantially reduced. The beneficial affect appears to derive from not allowing full formation of the tip vortices by means of the present invention.

5 Further, in one embodiment of the present invention there is provided an impeller with a shroud of diameter  $D_a$  and a plurality of predominantly radial auxiliary vanes on the face of the front shroud with a diameter  $D_b$ , the radially outermost end of the vane tapers back to the shroud at an angle  $Z$ . The shroud, side liner and auxiliary vane wear has been found to be particularly reduced when  $D_b$  is less than  $0.9D_a$ . This appears to be due to  
10 there being sufficient space between the tip of the auxiliary vane and the shroud periphery to trap the trailing vortices. The diameter  $D_b$  is preferably approximately the same as the diameter of the main pumping vane. This relationship ensures that the pressure reducing capability of the auxiliary vanes is not significantly impaired when compared to the pressure generated by the main pumping vanes.

15

### Brief Description of Drawings

The present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which : -

20

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a prior art impeller as shown by Figure 1 of United States Patent No. 4,664,592;

25 Figure 2 is a partial sectional view of a conventional impeller and expeller or auxiliary vane of a centrifugal pump;

Figure 3 is a magnification of the circled portion of Figure 2 showing the slurry flow paths between a auxiliary vane and casing liner;

30

Figure 4 shows a series of photographs of wear profiles on typical expelling vanes;

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Figures 5 is a part sectional view similar to Figure 2 but showing an embodiment of an impeller in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 6 is a photograph showing the wear profile of auxiliary vanes of a prior art  
5 impeller;

Figure 7 is a photograph showing the wear profile of auxiliary vanes on an impeller in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

10 Figure 8 is an axial or end view of a further embodiment of an impeller in accordance with the present invention; and

Figure 9 is an axial or end view of yet another embodiment of an impeller in accordance with the present invention.

15

### Best Modes

The prior art impeller 1 of Figure 1 is fully described in US 4,664,592 and it will be understood by reference to that specification.

20

As shown in Figure 2 an impeller 20 is housed in casing liner 21. Slurry travels through impeller 20 from inlet 22 to outlet 23 of each pumping chamber 24 as the impeller rotates within casing liner 21. A recirculating flow of slurry from outlet 23 to inlet 22 occurs naturally and causes abrasive wear of the inlet side liner 25. Expelling or auxiliary  
25 vane 26 acts to move the recirculating slurry 27 back toward the impeller outlet as represented by particles 28. The slurry flow path between impeller 20 and liner 25 is shown in more detail by Figure 3.

The wear profiles of the auxiliary vanes apparent in the photographs of Figure 4 are  
30 demonstrative of the problem confronted by industry and to be ameliorated by application of embodiments of the present invention.

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Figure 5 includes the same reference numerals for like parts as those designated in Figures 2 and 3. In this embodiment of the present invention the auxiliary vanes are straight, with a diameter to the point shown on auxiliary vane 26 of  $Db=0.85Da$ , wherein  
 5 Da is the shroud diameter, and where angle  $Z=45^\circ$ . The diameter of Db is approximately equal to the diameter of main pumping vane denoted as Dc in Figure 5.

Testing of this embodiment of the present invention and comparing its results with a prior art example of the kind shown by Figure 4 exhibits much reduced wear at the vane  
 10 tips and on the adjacent side liner for approximately the same operating time.

As can be seen in the photograph of Figure 6, the wear on the auxiliary vanes of these known impeller is extensive.

15 By contrast, the auxiliary vanes on the impeller of Figure 7 are in considerably better condition than those shown in Figure 6, despite having been under operation in a similar environment and for a similar period of time.

20 The impeller embodiment 30 of Figure 8 is formed with auxiliary vanes 31 having curved leading and trailing edges instead of straight as for the embodiments of Figures 5 and 7. The corresponding prior art arrangement is shown in Figure 6. Again, this embodiment of the present invention shows much reduced wear at the vane tips when compared with its prior art equivalent for similar operating times.

25 The embodiment of Figure 9 shows yet another variation of profile for the auxiliary vanes 41 of the impeller 40.

30 Finally, it is to be understood that the inventive concept in any of its aspects can be incorporated in many different constructions so that the generality of the preceding description is not to be superseded by the particularity of the attached drawings. Various alterations, modifications and/or additions may be incorporated into the various



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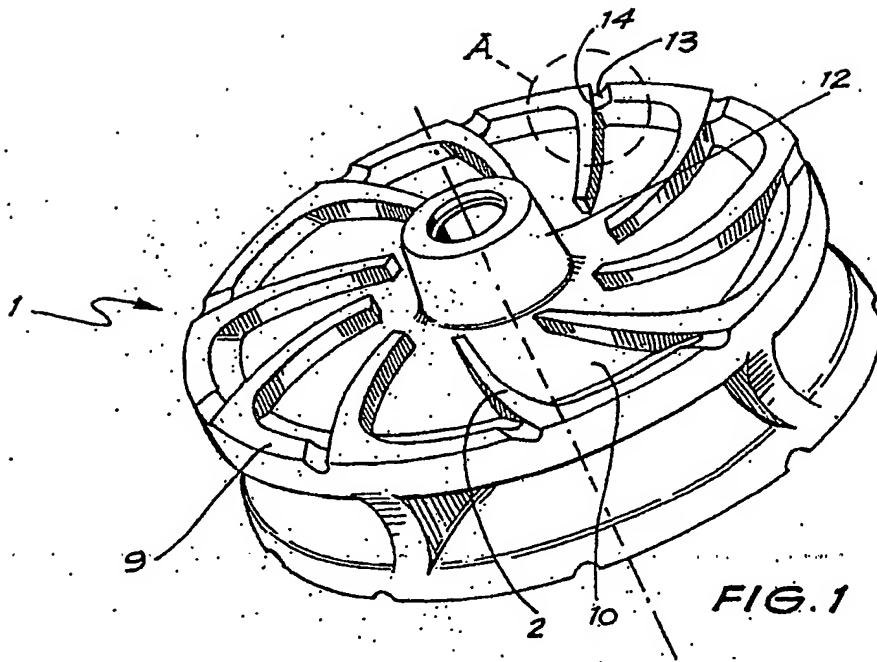
constructions and arrangements of parts without departing from the spirit or ambit of the invention.

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2003

5 WEIR WARMAN LTD

By Its Patent Attorneys

DAVIES COLLISON CAVE



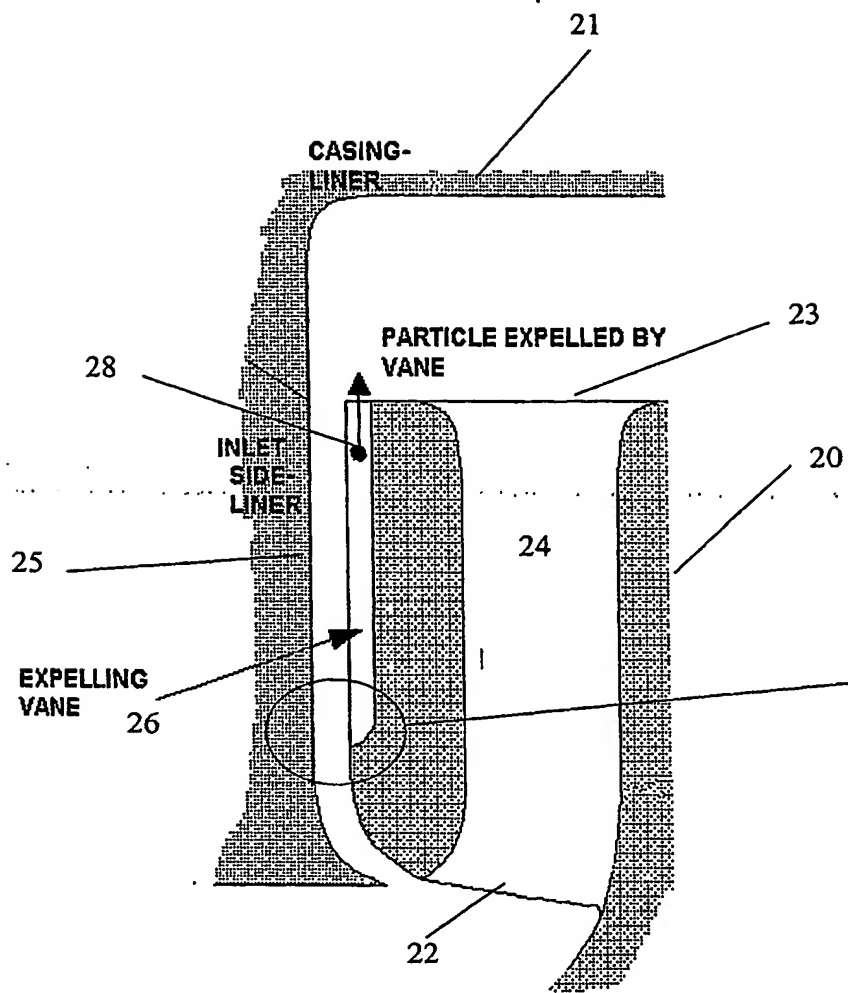


FIGURE 2

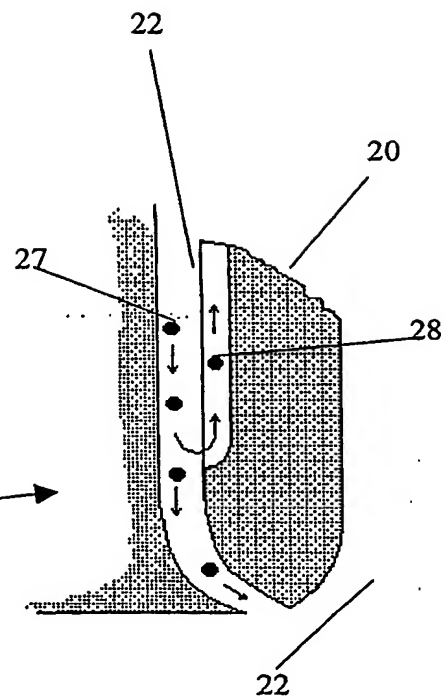


FIGURE 3



**FIGURE 4**

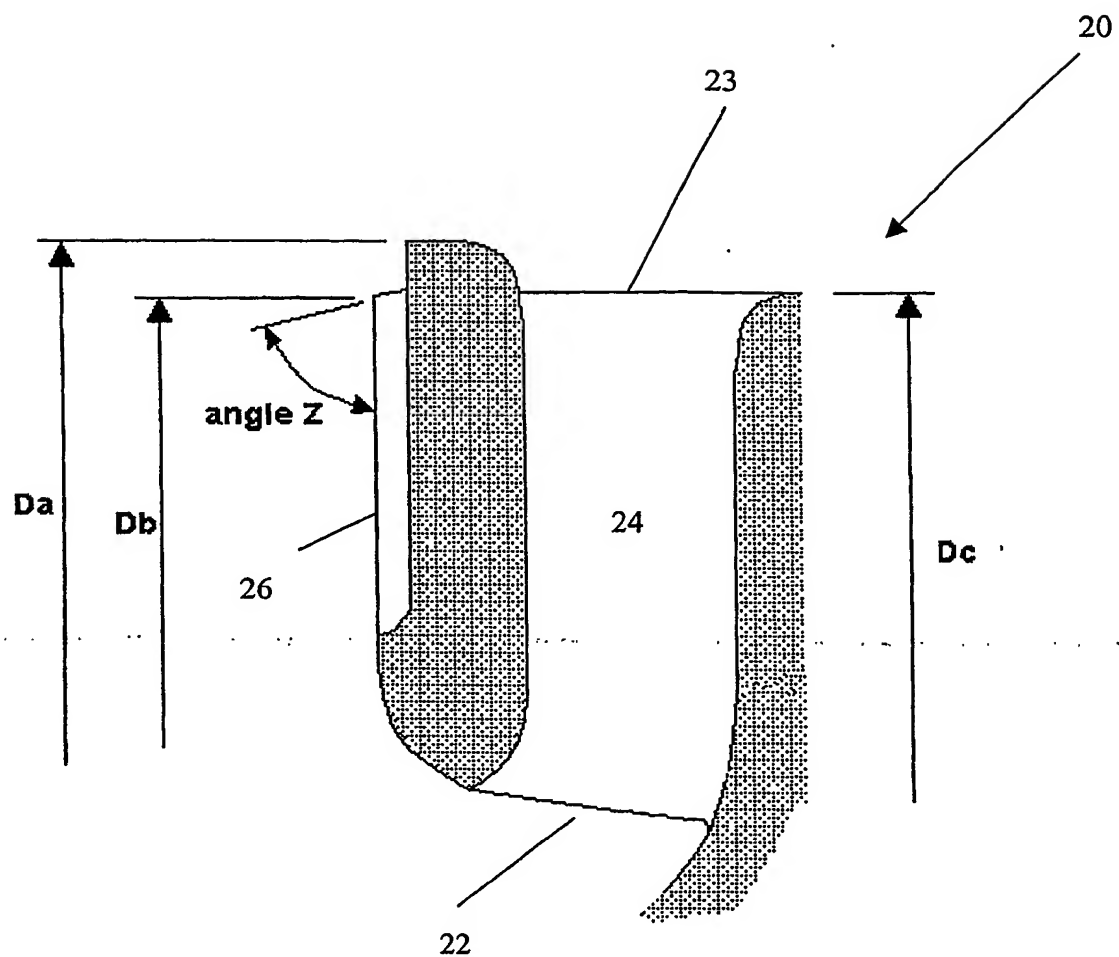
**FIGURE 5**



FIGURE 6

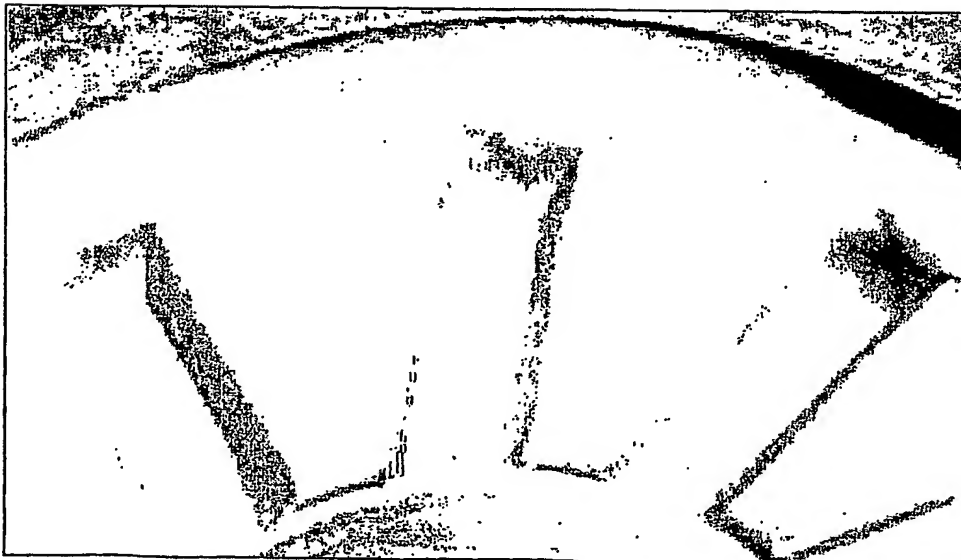


FIGURE 7

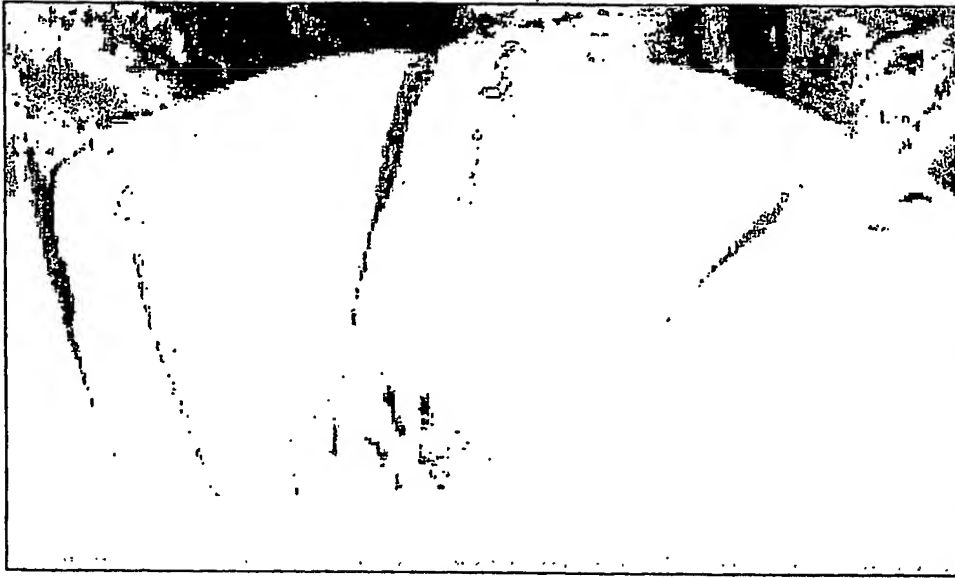


FIGURE 6

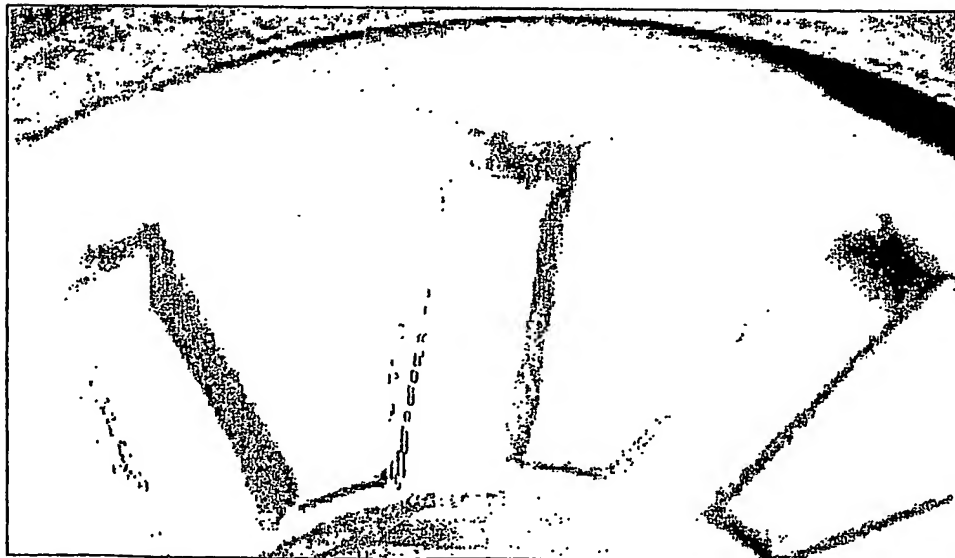


FIGURE 7

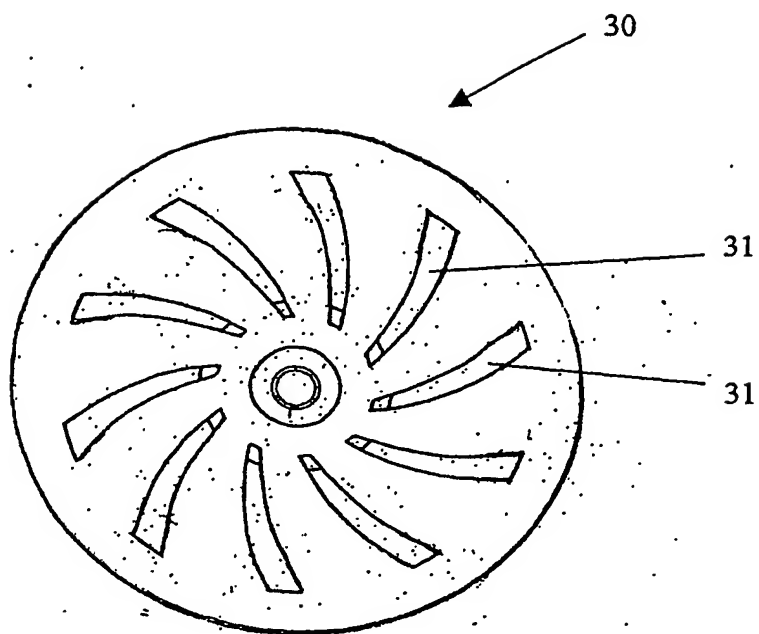
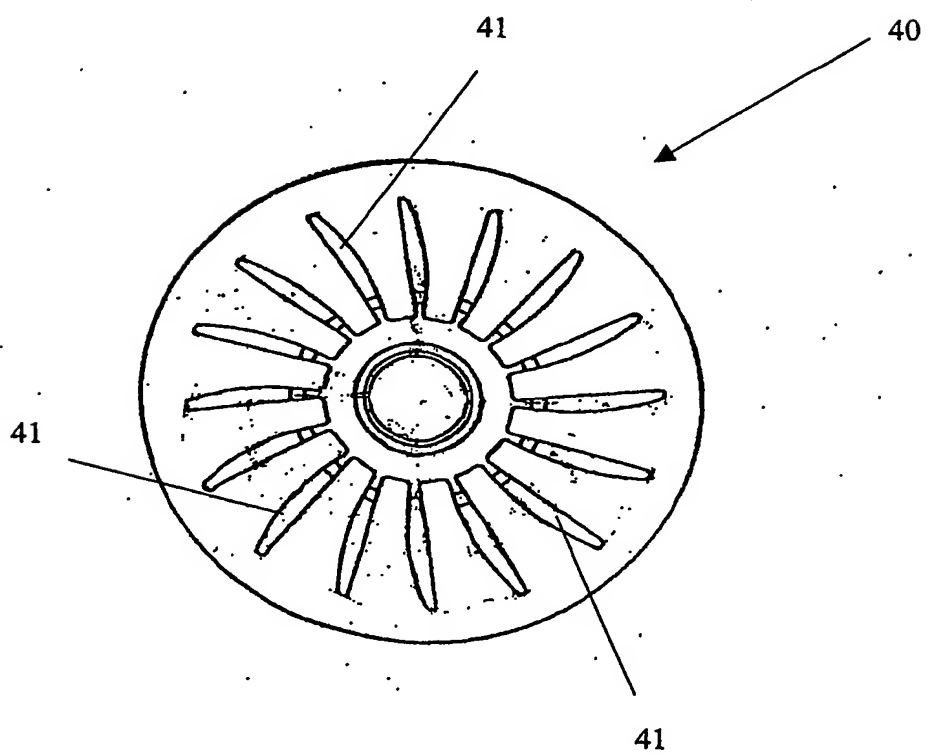


**FIGURE 6**



**FIGURE 7**



**FIGURE 8****FIGURE 9**

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